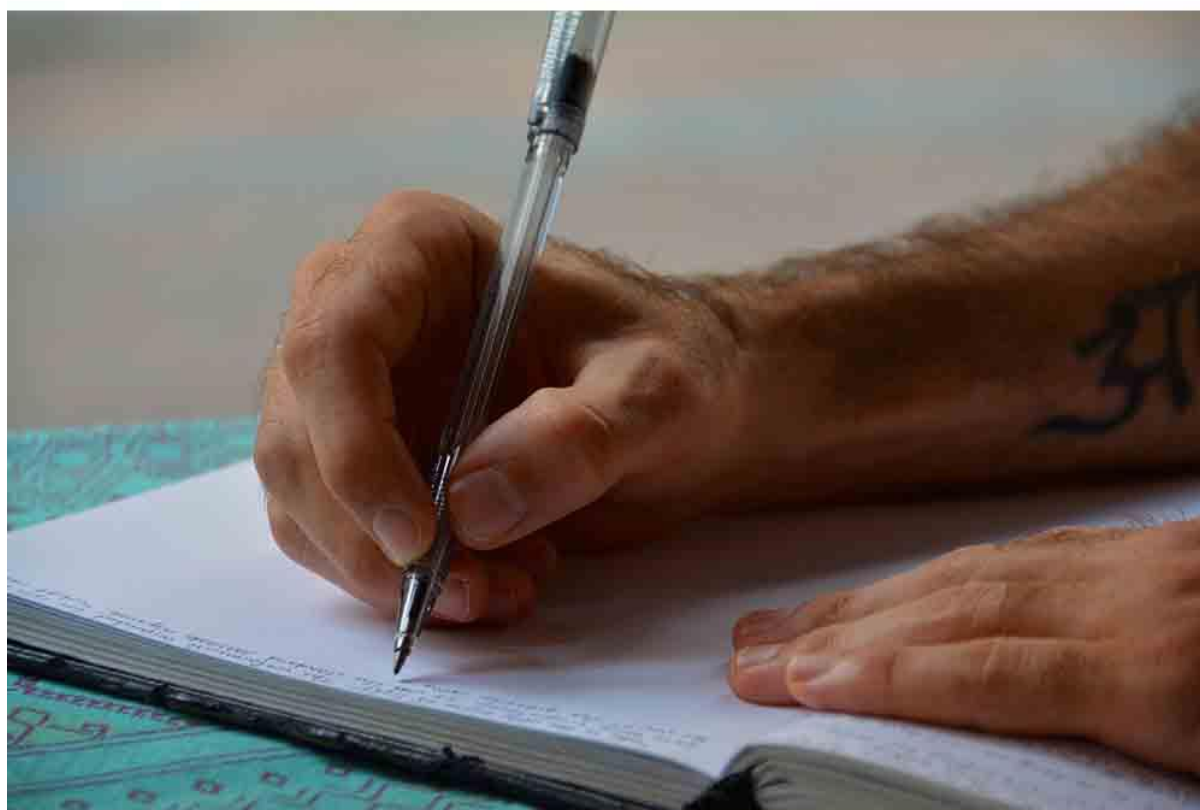


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Big Five Personality Traits in Ken Kesey's *one flew over the Cuckoo's Nest*

Abstract

This essay attempts to define personality and its characteristic features in the branch of personality psychology. It is an analysis of a people which make to understand what they are has been a longstanding challenge through the big five personality traits. Most types of personality attempts to describe human personality. Here the focus is given to big five personality traits. Sometimes it is interchangeably called with term five factor model. The big five represents Openness, Conscientiousness, Extroversion, Agreeableness, Neuroticism. It is easy to remember with the acronym OCEAN. This research continues to support the notion that each character of the novel *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* written by Ken Kesey possess each of the five personality characteristics to some degree. Each of the characters represent one or combination of two traits in nature. This essay tries to find out each one's traits and fit it under the category. Personality is dynamic, unique, specific which is everything about a person. The characters Chief Bromden, Randle McMurphy, Nurse Ratched fit into the big five personality traits accurately.

Key words: personality, conscientiousness, traits, openness, neuroticism.

Everyone talks about personality a lot but most of the people feel hard to define “personality”. People say that it is something a person “possess” or “has” (Mangal, S.K , 253). If a person is asked to describe personality of someone in words, the description may look like ‘friendly’ ‘nice’ ‘forceful’ ‘aggressive’. So, what people meant by personality is that how a person usually behaves with other people.

Most of the psychologists admit that personality depends on variations in each one’s characteristic patterns of thinking, feeling and behaving. According to the definition of American Psychological Association (APA), Personality is a dynamic concept because it changes often and it is an organized set of characteristics belonged to a person that shows the individual influences to their environment, cognitions, emotions, motivations and behaviors in varied situations.(APA, 2017). It also depends on the predictions that how human treat other problems, how human react to problems and stress in life.

The term ‘personality’ originates from the Latin word “persona” that means mask or the character it projects. While Carl Jung defines the archetypes of human behavior, he opines some important archetypes that include persona, the shadow, the anima and the wise old man. He admits that persona refers to mask which everyone carries around all the time. The purpose of personality study aims that understanding everyone’s variations is unique in social situations. Personality psychology is a branch of psychology that practices personality and its uniqueness among the various people. The concept of personality is more complicated to define it. People think that the characterstic labels like pretty, poor, gentle are come under personality. But the fact is much more deeper and far beyond than mere outward appearance.

According to the words of Watson, the father of behaviourism, says that “personality is the sum of activities that can be discovered by actual observations over a long enough period of time to give reliable information”.

After some more years, Morton Prince defines, “Personality is a sum total of all biological innate dispositions, tendencies, impulses acquired by experiences” (Prince, Morton. 532). Critics comment that it is not by the elements which define personality because its look like counting each brick to describe a house. D.W.Fiske (1949) begins the Big five personality traits research and then Norman (1967) Smith (1967) Goldberg (1981) and McCrae & Costa (1987) expanded the theory and find some evidence after so many experiments. This Big Five Personality trait is the model to understand the relationship between personality & human abstract behaviors. It spreads worldwide among various kinds of people. The most prevalent personality framework is the “Big Five,” or the Five- Factor model of personality. Not only does this theory of personality apply in multiple countries and cultures around the world (Schmitt et al., 2007), there is a valid and reliable assessment scale for measuring the five factors.

An individual’s pattern of psychological process arising from motives, feelings, thoughts, and other major psychological function. Personality is expressed through its influences on body, in conscious mental life, through the individual’s social behavior. (Mayer. 2005)

Topes, Christal, Goldberg at the Oregon research institute, Cattell have worked separately within this unwritten personality theory (Cattell, R.B.21) and they have labeled it in another names with another definitions. Mostly they are interconnected (38). The five traits are Openness to experience, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Neuroticism (Eysenck, 42). Everyone possessed a combination of two or more aspects in five personality traits. As personality cannot be defined, it is not a stable one. It is unique in nature. Even identical twins could not behave in the same way over a period of time. A man, one who is an extrovert may change into an introvert depending upon so many intervening reasons. So, it is hard to particularize each personality in one criteria. These Big five personality traits may be

also called by its acronym as 'OCEAN' theory. This Five Factor Model is taxonomy for big five personality traits.

Openness to experience has been described as the depth and also has complexity of an individual's mental life (John and Srivastava, 1999). A person who is fond of emotions, adventure, innovative ideas, imagination, curiosity, variety of experience is characterized under openness. Basically, they are more creative and aware of their feelings. They quickly understand things because the absorption level is high and they have full of ideas. This kind of people is interested in crafts and arts, music. Writers, critics, scientists, musicians probably come under openness to experience. People with low score on openness are closed to experience. Among other traits openness and extrovert are positive vibrations.

The concept of conscientiousness displays Act dutiful, self – discipline and strives for achievement against measure or outside expectations. They are always pays attention to details, order and follows schedule. They are hard workers mostly to the extreme, they are workaholic and perfectionists. They like to follow every rules and regulations. Someone who is high in conscientiousness is likely to be successful in school and their carrier, to excel in leadership positions (Lebowitz, 2016).

Extraverted people love the life of party (Lebowitz, 2016). They feel comfortable around people. Extraverts enjoy interacting with people. Generally people are combination of extraversion & introversion. It is based on one's energy, interaction with others. Basically these personalities are socialable, assertive, merry, outgoing, energetic, socially confident, and talkative (Lebowitz, 2016). They tend to seek out opportunities for social interaction. Introvert people reflects calm, reserved and thoughtful in nature.

Agreeableness traits reflect individual variation in general concern for social harmony. They are kind, considerate, generous, trustworthy, and helpful and give importance to other's values. This factor concerns how well people get along with others and it depends

on how people generally interact with others. They are most trusting, modern, humble and kind. They are well liked, respected and sensitive to the needs of others. They are sympathetic to the plight of strangers (Lebowitz, 2016a).

Neuroticism is a tendency to experience negative emotions like anger and anxiety of depression. These emotional instability make people get irritated easily and frequently with their mood swings. They are pessimist towards work. This major trait is also a negative trait. It is not a trait of meanness but one of the traits of confidence. It includes jealousy, melody, pessimistic, awkward, timid and weary.

Most of the writers create psychology oriented novels in the later half of the nineteenth century. *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens, *Villette* by Charlotte Bronte, *The Portrait of a Lady* by Henry James, *Cold Comfort Farm* by Stella Gibbons and *The Book Shop* by Penelope Fitzgerald are some of the novels based on psychological aspects in the later half of nineteenth century. The aim of the paper is to characterize everyone under the big five personality traits. Ken Kesey is the one who created the characters on the basis of each psychological aspect and well developed throughout the novel. In 1962, Ken Kesey sets his first novel *One Flew Over the Cuckoo Nest* at psychiatric hospital in Oregon. The book is narrated by chief Bromden, a half native American who muted himself as deaf and dumb because of authoritative power which made him lobotomized. He sees the changes after the arrival of Randle McMurphy. Everyone loves his companionship in few days. But it becomes a problem for nurse Ratched who rules the hospital rudely. The characters in that hospital reflect each of one of the personality traits and combination of the two.

Big nurse or Nurse Ratched, a former army nurse and part of the military hierarchy does her job with emotion(4). She scrutinizes everyone with iron hand. she makes the acute turn into vegetables (nothing in use). She manipulates everyone and creates conflict between them. She is the one who judges whom should work there. McMurphy questions her authority

and condemns her actions. She never wants anyone to question her. She projects pessimism all through the novel. The high level of neuroticism is shown through in her actions. She insults Billy Bibbit and reason for Billy Bibbit's suicide(272).

Mcmurphy, is an extravert guy. He mingles with each and everyone within a minute when he joins the hospital (11). He does all illegal activities and he transfers his punishment from prison to mental asylum, by tricking him as mentally affected patient. He changes his place often because he never wants to be controlled in one place. He is not a spirit of good human being who follows the social norms and practices. But he is the one who loves to do whatever makes him happy. He is a thirty five years old, unmarried and sentenced because of drunkenness, assault and disturbing the peace, repeated gambling and for rape (20). He loves to interact with everyone and make fun with Dale Harding in the first meeting. while he made fun with Dale Harding, he says that

Mr. Bibbit, you might warn this Mr. Harding that I'm so crazy I admit to
Voting for Eisenhower. Harding says that Bibbit! You tell Mcmurphy I'm so
Crazy I voted for Eisenhower twice! And you tell McMurphy right back.(20)

Chief Bromden, nicknamed chief broom is the narrator of the whole story. He is a combination of conscientiousness and agreeableness. Once, he was a well known farmer's son whose fishery place is abducted by government construction of a hydroelectric dam (6). He lost everything in his life and was affected by hallucination and paranoids. He started to live as a deaf and dumb because he knows the truth very well that nurse Ratched will make him chronic after knowing the secret. By the end of the novel, he is cured from hallucination and escapes from the hospital. He notices every cunning attitude of Nurse Ratched. He is dutiful to his works.

Though he hides himself from reality, he accepts the reality. He places Mcmurphy as Christ-like figure who comes to rescue the inmates. He considers him as a superman, who

comes from sky to rescue all and gathers all in a fishing trip as he fishers the men. Bromden carries contrast view of Murphy. He makes Mcmurphy to suffocate and die, because he knows that Ratched will make him lobotomized very soon. His assessment of character is noticeable. He gives importance to other's life as well. So only he helps Mcmurphy and others in the fishing picnic.

Nurse Ratched is purely characterized under neuroticism. She wants everyone to be under her control. As a retired army nurse, she uses the power of hatred to get things done. Even she smiles often, the cunningness showed in her action. She does not feel the guilt of making two inmates to commit suicide and one to be lobotomized. She is called as Big nurse, an oppressive character like Big Brother in George Orwell's novel *1984*. She shames Billy Bibbit often. She never minds to hurt others.

Each character of the novel reflects one of the major traits of personality. As personality is a dynamic one, the characters change themselves into another to the response of intervening factors given by the environment. The big five personality traits also predicts one's nature of behavior as how one will behave in a particular situation and one's pattern of adjustment to the ever- changing forces of environment.

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